



CARES Act Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER-II) Planning Considerations

Mental Health Supports and Services (Tier 1):

- Utilize school climate surveys to identify areas of need
- Implement school climate improvement plans based upon assessment of need
- Fund the implementation of the Pyramid Model to support the social-emotional development of preschool students
- Develop, implement, and/or enhance a system for conducting regular mental health check-ins with students
- Examine current discipline practices and seek consultation and training to foster positive behaviors, relationships, and behavioral interventions
- Fund substitutes to cover release time for staff to be NJ Positive Behavior Supports in Schools (NJPBSIS) implementation team leaders and/or members
- Create and/or enhance a designated space in the school building for students to access that promotes wellness and proactive coping strategies
- Incorporate trauma-informed practices and social-emotional learning into classroom instruction in a manner that supports equity and inclusion and reflects cultural responsiveness
- Support or enhance suicide prevention programming
- Contract with a mental health provider to provide alternative therapeutic methodologies (music, art, play therapy) for students
- Create or improve upon a system for tracking referrals to Tier 2 and Tier 3 services, monitoring progress, and analyzing trends
- Provide substitute coverage for identified staff member(s) in order to participate in the local County Children's Interagency Coordination Council (CIACC), County Ed Partnerships, and/or Youth Services Advisory Councils
- Invest in a system or specific methods of monitoring the social-emotional well-being of staff
- Contract with a provider to offer faculty/staff well-being support groups
- Create and/or enhance a designated space in the school building for staff to access that promotes wellness and proactive coping strategies
- Provide opportunities for staff to access in-district child care and education programs to address staffing needs
- Consider flexible scheduling for staff using funds to pay for substitute teachers and/or coverage
- Provide workshops before/after school to families in order to support students at home by sharing how to: talk about crises; recognize normal physical, emotional, and behavioral responses to crises; foster resilience, and other healthy coping strategies
- Purchase or subscribe to a HIPAA-compliant platform for identified school-based mental health staff to store counseling notes and information

Mental Health Supports and Services (Tier 2):

- Designate certificated staff and/or contracted provider to assess students who show signs of mental health concerns, including trauma
- Invest in a system, district-wide and within school buildings, to track students in need of referral to community-based mental health supports
- Develop a system, district-wide and within school buildings, to assist school-based personnel with follow-up activities and services
- Provide staff to implement mentoring programs, group interventions, check-in/check-out systems, and/or in-school skill building groups (i.e.: social skills, problem solving skills, goal setting). Link students who are identified as needing additional social-emotional mental health supports
- Provide certificated staff for home visits to follow-up on students who are identified through early-warning systems
- Contract with a mental health provider to provide brief individual and group therapeutic services to identified students
- Create partnerships with appropriate mental health providers to perform risk assessments for students in crisis to reduce or eliminate the use of emergency room visits for students with mental health needs and to directly link the student(s) to appropriate community-based services

Mental Health Supports and Services (Tier 3):

- Contract with a mental health provider to provide individual and group therapeutic services to identified students
- Contract with community agencies to provide family therapy and support to identified students
- Fund district mental health staff to provide summer gap services (e.g., individual, group, and/or family therapy)
- Create a position, or contract with a provider, to individually assess students who are identified as having significant behavioral needs, develop behavior plans, and consult with teachers and support staff responsible for implementing the plans

Mental Health Supports and Services Professional Development:

- Provide coaching and training to administrators on positive discipline practices
- Contract with providers to train pre-K staff on the implementation of the Pyramid Model
- Identify relevant professional development opportunities for I & RS team members to increase the team's ability to develop plans for Tier 2 and Tier 3 behavior interventions
- Access training in schoolwide (Tier 1) programs to address mental health literacy, positive school climate, positive discipline and behavior practices, trauma-informed practices, cultural competency, and/or social-emotional learning
- Provide more intensive training to educators in methods to identify students exhibiting signs of depression or suicidality across in-person, remote, and hybrid settings
- Provide training to establish or enhance the skills of a crisis intervention team